COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is novel coronavirus?**

   Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person. It is currently in the United States and many other countries, after originating in China. Health experts are concerned because this new virus has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people — especially people over age 60 or who have weakened immune systems.

2. **How does novel coronavirus spread?**

   Health experts are still learning more about the spread. Currently, it is thought to spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), by touching a surface or object with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes.
   Most coronavirus illnesses are mild with fever and cough. The vast majority of people with novel coronavirus infection do not require hospital care. A much smaller percentage of people get severely ill with lung and breathing problems like pneumonia. Elderly people and people with underlying medical conditions are at highest risk.

3. **What happens now that there is a first presumptive case in Tarrant County?**

   The individual is currently in isolation at a local Fort Worth hospital. Health officials with TCPH are working to identify any contacts who may have been exposed while he/she was contagious, and schedule necessary tests. Anyone identified to have had close contact with the patient will be contacted directly by TCPH and health care staff.

   For the general public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediately health risk from COVID-19 remains low. If you have not been around anyone with COVID-19 or have not visited an ongoing outbreak area, you are currently not considered to be at risk. The City of Fort Worth continues to implement preparedness and precautionary efforts to ensure the health and well-being of all residents and city employees.

4. **When do I seek medical evaluation and advice?**

If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first. If you're over 60 and you have underlying conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease, come up with a plan with your doctor to identify your health risks for coronavirus and how to manage symptoms. Contact your doctor right away if you do have symptoms. If you have symptoms and you were exposed to someone confirmed to have the virus, call both your

health care provider and our Tarrant County Public Health Coronavirus Hotline: 817-248-6299.

5. **How can I protect myself from novel coronavirus?**

People should practice routine healthy hygiene habits to help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19, such as washing hands frequently, covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth, and staying home if sick. If you are traveling overseas, follow the CDC's guidance: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

6. **How is novel coronavirus treated?**

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

7. **Who should get tested?**

Not everybody who feels ill needs to be tested, particularly if you have mild illness. Healthcare providers determine who should be tested. While testing is becoming more available, there are still limitations in the ability to quickly collect and process tests.

If you are sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath and are in a high risk group, call your healthcare provider to discuss whether you should be tested for COVID-19.

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People at high risk for complications from COVID-19 are:

- People older than 60 years
- People with chronic medical condition
- People with weakened immune systems
- Pregnant people

Other people with mild illness who are concerned about their health can call their healthcare provider to discuss COVID-19 testing and other possible reasons for their illness.

8. **Do you have a confirmed or suspected case of covid-19?**

Restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, taxis, or ride-share. Monitor your symptoms and call before visiting your doctor. If you have an appointment, be sure you tell them you have or may have COVID-19. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw away in a lined trashcan. Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. If you can't wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Clean all "high touch" surfaces every day, such as counters, tables, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, phones, and keyboards. Remain in home isolation for 7 days OR until 72 hours after your fever has resolved (and symptoms get better) whichever is longer.

9. **Is quarantine different from isolation?**

Yes.

- Quarantine is for people who are not currently showing symptoms but are at increased risk for having been exposed to an infectious disease. Quarantine is for people who could become sick and spread the infection to others.

- Isolation is used for people who are currently ill and able to spread the disease and who need to stay away from others in order to avoid infecting them.

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10. **Can people in self-quarantine still have contact with their household members?**

Yes, people in self-quarantine are not sick and can still have contact with their household members. Should they develop any symptoms, they are asked to quickly and safely isolate from all others, including those in their household, and to contact their medical provider.

11. **Where do I go for local information?**

Please visit Tarrant County Public Health's website or the city's website for any questions regarding COVID-19: fortworthtexas.gov/COVID-19
If you have any questions regarding COVID-19, please call the Tarrant County Coronavirus Hotline: **817-248-6299**

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